



Dingley Village Pump

December 2023

Editor: Running the risk of sounding a bit 'Bah humbug', am I the only person who thinks that Christmas is coming a bit too early year on year? I'm writing this on November 15th and the Christmas trees are already adorning the streets in Market Harborough. My birthday is near the end of November and when I was a kid, that was well out of the way before the next lot of excitement began. I wonder how we would describe our ideal Christmas. Family, food, films and gifts probably figure quite highly. Some people still celebrate it as a religious festival and make their occasional appearance in church. Last year my Christmas cactus flowered profusely in September. This year; nothing!

Well, that's proper miserable, so to make up for lack of festive spirit I'm including a few Christmassy jokes, pictures and decoration ideas.

And I really, truly wish you all a very Happy Christmas. Merry too!

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A Poem for Christmas

Christmas poems tend to be either very traditional, in the manner of carols, or to take an 'alternative' view of the great Christian festival. In recent editions of the *Pump* we've had both: Thomas Hardy's 'The Oxen' which gives us the old belief that at midnight on Christmas Eve the farm animals all kneel in homage, to T S Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi' where the birth at Bethlehem is seen through the uncomprehending eyes of the three Magi. And there are frivolous verses too, of course, which won't really do here! This poem is by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – yes, the author of 'Hiawatha' – and although very much in the traditional mode, fits the feeling of the state of the world at this time.

Christmas Bells

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words
repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.

I thought how, as the day had
come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth, ' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the
song
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.'



Then pealed the bells more loud
and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He
sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right
prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to
men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to
day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to
men.

“The bells, the bells!”

Dingley parish church has a ring of five bells, made by Edward Arnold, a bellfounder in Cambridgeshire during the 18th century. The sound of bells ringing out is so evocative of the English village. Bells last a very long time, but not for ever. Our greatgrandchildren may never hear them, as there is only now one bellfoundry left in the UK, Taylors of Loughborough. It is possible to visit Taylors, and it is an interesting outing.

Santa only had two reindeers: Rudolph and Olive (the other reindeer).

Garden Notes Winter 2023

What a strange year this has been for us all when it comes to our gardens. However, “strange” seems to have become the new normal as our seasons merge. Though lawns and paths are littered with leaves many trees seem reluctant to shed their plumage of orange, yellow and red.

One sunny morning a spiky white blob appeared and on closer inspection revealed a dahlia in flower. In November? These were planted to provide colour much earlier in the year. They will be left to take their chances where they are with the help of a deep layer of mulch.

The changing climate has brought storm after storm for much of the year and are forecast to be more frequent and possibly fiercer. Safety should be the focus of winter preparation to prevent accidents.

Check trees for signs of diseased or weak boughs. Are they secure in the ground? Shallow rooted trees in waterlogged ground can fall. Mature espaliered or fantrained fruit trees can be heavy, check the wires and supporting posts holding them to their allotted space.

Check glazing in greenhouses, cold frames and garden structures. Secure any loose panes.

Prune roses but leave hydrangeas, penstemons and hardy fuchsias till spring; the last two should be pruned when new growth shows.

If you planted prepared hyacinths in September, check whether a shoot is emerging. If so, put in a cool place with indirect light to encourage the flower bud to develop.

Time to cut down all the detritus of spent flowering annuals and perennials. Cut hellebore leaves to the ground to give space to the flowering stems when they emerge.

Hardy cyclamens are producing seedpods resembling cherries in size and shape. All parts of a cyclamen are poisonous; cyclamen seedpods may attract children because of their size, shape and easy to find. Remind children not to eat anything they find without asking an adult if it is safe. It came to my attention recently that many common garden plants are poisonous to dogs. All forms of alliums and garden pinks, amongst them. Dogs, unfortunately, are particularly attracted to the alliums. Should dogs be part of your family it might be wise to obtain an authoritative list of those plants that pose a danger to them.

Container plants need especial care. Raise the container clear of the ground to ensure good drainage, check the soil is not completely dried out. Drought will kill them in winter as well as in summer.

Place indoor plants nearer to windows to give them as much light as possible. Take care with watering. Plants in unheated rooms will need less than those in heated rooms. Christmas cacti are coming into flower just now. Do not move them or they may drop all their flowers.

What a lot of do's and don'ts!

Remove any decaying matter from garden ponds and reduce feed for fish as they become less active. Net ponds if possible to keep falling leaves out. Birds and small animals need clean water. Check the containers are clean. Any tinge of green could cause infection in small creatures.

Garden Centres as opposed to nurseries remain open throughout the year and are worth visiting in winter to see what looks good in winter. Keeping a note of plants in your own garden that stand up to adverse weather and those that do not can help decide what to remove and what to keep.

Winter can be a very busy time for gardeners, with work compressed into the short daylight hours. So much that needs to be done.

However, it is, perhaps, more important to take time off to enjoy your own patch, large or small. Maybe take 'proper' photographs with a camera,

watch the birds. Catch up with friends and family, however you choose to spend this winter I wish you good health and happiness now and for the new year.

Jean Strutt

Gar haha dening.

I plant my herbs in alphabetical order. People ask how I find the time. I say it's next to the sage.

What style of trousers do gardeners wear? Ones with turnips.

What's small, red and whispers? A hoarse radish.

What did the big flower say to the small flower? What's up, bud.

How much space should you give to fungi?

As mushroom as possible.

What if worms take over the world? That's global wormin.

Rebel Intent (aka The Revolution)

Gig in Village Hall

Friday 1st March 2024

(NB: Ticketed event)

Dingley now has TWO groups, Heard Immunity (which many of you have heard) and Rebel Intent (previously 'Revolution' in Village WhatsApp message a few months ago).

Rebel Intent is formed of two (maybe three) villagers but has a few non-Dingley-ites, (UK artists from as far-afield as Corby, Arthingworth and Market Harborough).

Expect an eclectic mix of music including covers of The Cure, The Stranglers, Taylor Swift, Martha and the Vandellas, Amy MacDonald, Black Crows, etc. etc. You name it, we're probably not covering it, but there should be something for everyone.

Tickets are available from Dave Wheway

dwheway@outlook.com

07794 291312

Dingley Does

Back at last, through enormous demand, ("What's that Lassie? We should do another Dingley Does?").

This is planned as a Village Hall event, on April 5th. 2024.

Dingley Does is an opportunity for anyone in the village to do a 'turn' such as a poetry reading, contortionist, some music, mimicry, a recitation, a magic trick, playing the spoons, telling some jokes, sharing some filthy postcards.

Ok, not that last one, but hopefully you get the gist.

Get in touch with Dave Wheway if you have something to offer, and of course, save the date in your diary.

Dave Wheway dwheway@outlook.com

07794 291312

Dingley Running Club

The running club still meets every Sunday outside the village Hall at 9.00am.

The club is always looking for new members, and ensures that there is always someone to run at your pace (as long as your pace is not faster than about 8-minutes a mile or 5 minutes a kilometre!



Anna Fitz - PB for 5km

There are two achievements to report in this edition. Anna Fitz achieved a personal best recently for 5km on the Dingley to Meat Link course. Congratulations to Anna who clocked in a time of 28:17.

David Wheway achieved his aim of a sub 2-hour half marathon in Bath in October with a time of 1:57:30. This was a personal best in the 65-69 age range.

Swiss/Mex potato bake



Vegetarian? Yes, but only if veggie style smoked-bacon used.

Cooking time

Prep: 20 mins **Cook:** 45 mins

(All but the cheese can be prepared in advance and kept in fridge for a day or two). Freezes well.

Servings

Serves 4 as a main, or up to 8 as a side-dish.

Ingredients

- 1kg floury potatoes, cut into bite-sized chunks
- knob of butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 200g smoked bacon, cut into small pieces (before/ after cooking)
- 125ml dry white wine
- 142ml pot double cream
- 350g gruyere cheese, grated (or alternative use cheddar/raclette.....)
- About 1 tsp chipotle to taste. (Alternatively - half tsp smoked paprika)

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. In a large pan, cook the potatoes for 5 mins until just tender (don't over-cook), then drain and tip potatoes into a large mixing bowl. Allow to steam off water for at least 3 mins.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan and gently fry the onion until soft. Add the bacon and cook for a further 5 mins. Mix the bacon and onion with the potatoes in the bowl.
3. Stir in the wine, cream, **most of the cheese** (about 2/3rds) and chipotle. *Can add seasoning – but the bacon and chipotle is usually adequate.*

Mix together, then spread over a large (30cm long x 4cm deep) buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese, cover with foil and cook for 25 mins. Remove the foil and cook for a further 20 mins until the cheese is golden brown.

*I have this incredible ability to predict what's inside a wrapped parcel.
It's a gift!*

DIY Decorations

1.



Sit a pinecone in an eggcup. Paint it green, a dot of different coloured nail varnish on each tip for baubles.

2.



Simple interlocking rings of coloured or metallic paper

3.

Colour toilet roll tube brown. Stick on goggle eyes and red nose. Insert twigs for antlers



Dictionary Corner

A Word for Christmas 2023: Yule

We use 'Yule' and related terms such as 'Yule log' and 'Yuletide' as part of our Christmas vocabulary. But where does 'Yule' come from?

We know that our festival of Christmas coincides with earlier, pagan, midwinter festivals, and that many symbols of Christmas, such as decorations of holly and ivy, are relics of these early celebrations. 'Yule' is another of these; it is the name of the old, pagan winter festival. It began as a Germanic festival, brought to England by the Angles and Saxons in the so-called Dark Ages – from the 5th century AD to the Norman Conquest. 'Yule' or 'Yuletide' was celebrated throughout the German and Scandinavian world.

The old name for Yule as a pre-Christian festival is to be found in many languages such as Old Norse, where it appears as *Jul* or *Jol*. *Jolnir* is one of the names of the Old Norse god Odin, and can also mean a 'feast.'

The Yule log was a feature of Yuletide – a massive log kept burning for the twelve days of Christmas, thus combining the pagan and Christian

celebrations. The use of holly and ivy as indoor decorations was similarly a pagan practice, the evergreen branches and berries representing male and female fertility.

‘Yule’ is traditional in our culture, and appears in the work of many authors. This picture of a Victorian family Christmas is from Tennyson’s famous poem ‘In Memoriam’:



*Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:*

*The yule-log sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost*

Bill Jones

Village Hall News

The Village Hall has had a good year with several very successful events, such as the Burns Supper and the Coronation Party, and attendance at all events has been good. With another modest donation from North Northants Council, we are managing to keep our heads financially above water and have even managed to fund a refurbishment of the toilets and kitchen which will be completed by the time of the Christmas Party on 17th December, all thanks to the superb organising talents of Bruce Smith.

Please come along to the Christmas party and view for yourself the new and enhanced facilities. Don't forget that you can hire the hall at a very modest fee for your own private events – just speak to any member of the committee.

We are always on the lookout for new members to join the Village Hall Committee, to bring fresh ideas and to help organise and run the events. If you are interested in joining the committee, or can offer occasional

assistance, please contact any member of the committee – contact details are on the back page of this edition of the Pump.

Next Village Hall Event

Village Christmas Party – evening of Sunday 17th December. Bring a plate of Christmas nibbles to share and also share a glass or two of mulled wine with your neighbours.



The Christingle Event in the Church is on the same evening and will precede the party.

2024 Village Hall Events

Our provisional programme of events for 2024 is as follows:

Date	Event
26th January	Whisky tasting
2 nd February	Quiz Night
1 st March	Rebel Intent (band concert)
5 th April	Dingley Does
3 rd May	Village AGM & Fish'n'chip supper
7 th June	BBQ
June	Open Gardens
5 th July	French Night
6 th September	TBC
4 th October	TBC
1 st November	Bonfire night event
15 th December	Christmas Party from 7pm

Look out for details closer to the dates but put the dates on your calendars.

***Why did the turkey join the band?
Because it had drumsticks!***

Village News

Home Close is 50!

On Sunday 20th August most of the residents, and some former residents, of Home Close came together to celebrate 50 years since the Close was built. A few glasses of the excellent local fizz (Welland Valley Steeplechase) and plenty of other food and refreshments all contributed to a memorable occasion.

Possible New Village Hall

You may be aware that there is a planning application being prepared by a developer for the paddock on the east side of Braybrooke Road, just south of Home Close. A previous application was refused earlier this year but the revised plan, still in preparation, may contain provision for a new village hall, funded mostly by the developer. Included would be space for a community garden and play area.

Although the donation of the land and any new facilities to the village is clearly an attempt by the developer to obtain planning permission for three new houses on the remainder of the paddock, the proposal so far has the support of both the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee. The provision of a new village hall, with parking and suitable community space, would be very welcome given we currently lack any such community area in the village. The planning application will also secure the future of an otherwise redundant plot of land that has been neglected for several years and is of ongoing concern for neighbouring residents.

Please look out for the planning application over the next few months and, as with any planning application, you can comment via the North Northants Council Planning website. If you are supportive of the proposal when it is published, then please make positive comments in favour so that we can provide much needed community space for the future of our village.

If you'd like to know more, please speak to any member of the Parish Council or Village Hall Committee.

Village Communication

Besides the Pump, we have two other forms of communication in the village, an email list and a WhatsApp group. If you want to join the email group, please email dingleyvillagenews@gmail.com (you can unsubscribe at anytime), and if you want to join the WhatsApp group, please message Mark on 07849 669754.

Village Welcome Pack

For new residents of Dingley we have developed a Welcome Pack – some background to the village, local contacts and other useful information. You can find a copy of the pack on the Parish Council website, www.dingley-pc.gov.uk.

We try and provide a printed copy of the Welcome Pack for any new resident we are aware of and also try and include a copy of the excellent History of Dingley book, authored by Tony Lucas, funded by the Village Hall.

If you have any amendments to the Welcome Pack or know of any new resident, please contact jolyon.ingham@talk21.com



Bonfire and Fireworks on the Hall Drive

This popular event, arranged by the Village Hall Committee, was again a great success.

Attendance was slightly down on previous years, but we were treated to an excellent show with a high quality firework display, plenty of hot dogs, and a well-stocked bar. A big thank you to Duncan for arranging the fireworks and running the display, to Bruce K for the use of his barbecue, Ted for helping

locate and fuel the fire, Gordon for the use of

his generator, Henry for his mechanical assistance to build the bonfire, and not least to the residents of Dingley Hall for the location.

The whole village thanks the Village Hall Committee for the time and considerable effort they put into organising and running events like this for all our benefits.



Parish Council report: November 1 2023

There is not a great deal to report from the Parish Council since the last *Pump* was published. After the relative quiet of the summer, we met in September and recently on 1st November.

As usual the principal matter has been highways, especially the main road. Cllr Elaine Lomer-Wood keeps a vigilant eye on the road, and reported that the 40 mph 'buffer zone' to reduce speed of vehicles approaching in either direction was still awaited. Also the 'feign gates' are in need of repair, and this has been reported to North Northamptonshire Council (NNC). Following the NNC survey of drains there are improvement works planned, with property owners notified.

An important project, which is beginning to take meaningful shape is the planned cycle/footpath from the village to the Rockingham Road roundabout. Cllrs Steve Dudson and Laura Jones are leading on this, and exploring funding opportunities. Applications have gone to the National Lottery Community and Heritage Funds and to NNC Rural Prosperity Fund and Community Grants. The Parish Council was delighted to hear that the bid to the NNC Rural Prosperity Fund had succeeded, with £15,000 awarded. This will make a valuable opening contribution to this project. The first part of the pathway along the A427 will need to be carried out by the Highways authority, for which a decision is being sought. This is inevitably a medium to long-term project, which once complete will be a great asset to the community.

On other highways matters we received correspondence regarding the overgrown footpaths along the Harborough Road. This has been reported to NNC and has been added to the routine schedule of works.

The Friends of Dingley Park scheme has worked well this year, with members enjoying walking in the Park. We continue to seek more extended access for members.

We have decided to reduce the number of meetings of the Parish Council from the current ten to six per year. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th February. The Council of course continues to work outside the meetings as usual. This leads me to remind *Pump* readers that we still have a vacancy for a councillor – do please consider this opportunity to contribute to the community; you can contact me, (wrjarion@aol.com or 01858 410722) or Justina our Parish Clerk (clerk.dingley@gmail.com) to find out more. We also wish to thank Fiona Barnaby, who diligently represented the Village Hall Committee at our meetings.

With best Christmas wishes to everyone from your Parish Councillors.

Bill Jones

Chair, Dingley Parish Council

Church Notes

It's the greatest time of the year!

We hope you will come along with your family, friends and neighbours to enjoy Christmas at All Saints, Dingley. **All are welcome.**

It is a wonderful time of the year to visit church and we are delighted to have a full programme of services planned by the PCC. Back by popular demand is the **Christmas concert** followed by **Christingle** and then an earlier than usual **Christmas Eve Service**. All details below.

As we prepare the church for the festivities we will be **cleaning the brasses on Saturday 2nd December 10.30am to 11.30am**. Please come and join in and then share in a coffee and sherry!

Christmas at Dingley Church

Christmas Concert 9th December 7.00pm

Back by popular demand is our Christmas Concert with something for everyone. Our acts this year include Welford in Harmony conducted by Rebecca Schneider, Dominic Newman and many of your favourite village entertainers plus our Christmas sing-along at the end of the evening.

Tickets are £8.00 and include wine and canapés. Under 12's free. There will also be a cash bar.

For tickets contact: Jamie: 07712485780 Anne: 07504680248 Duncan: 07771881237 Shirley: 07785792300 Linda 07517205790

Christmas Christingle Service 17th December 6.00pm

*A small change to previous years. Your favourite Carols and Readings plus the normal Christingle for the children. The village Hall will be open after the service for you to share some Christmas spirit with the rest of the village from 7pm. **Donations to The Children's Society.***

Christmas Eve Service 24th December 6.00pm

Please note a new time this year to allow you more time on this very busy night, also arranged so we don't disturb Santa at midnight.

Mulled wine and mince pies served from 5.30pm.

Christmas is a special time for the Church; we hope you will find time to join us in the celebrations of Christ's birth and to use the opportunity to meet with your fellow villagers.

Wishing you and your family peace and joy this Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Jamie



A Story!

Oh! Mr. Porter what shall I do.....?

Oh! Mr Porter what shall I do.....?"; the popular Victorian Music Hall song of 1892 is not frequently heard today. However, from time to time it emerges having a meaning wider than that of being lost at railway stations.

Recently I have had two spells in one of our regional general hospitals and the song has been present in the atmosphere on each occasion.

At every stay in hospital, the ritual of taking temperature readings is performed by inserting a thermometer in an ear, often at two hourly intervals. I wear hearing aids one of which is removed for the reading to be taken. On one reading a small part of the hearing aid became detached and lodged in my ear. It has happened before and removal is a simple process. A doctor was summoned and he arrived the next day. Armed only with the light on his iPhone and forceps, which were of such substantial proportions that they would not enter an ear, he admitted failure and referred me to the Ear, Nose and Throat Department. Another day passed. The prospect of success arrived in the form of the hospital Porter, a former soldier and friend of tattoo parlours, and I was wheel-chaired to ENT. Here I was warmly greeted by name and the small part, a plastic dome, was removed in a matter of seconds. I carry spares and I began to fix the new dome to the hearing aid:-

"NO.....YOU can't do that yourself!"

"I do it every 10 days"

"Sorry, but you are in hospital now and it will have to be done in the Audiology Department."

So off we went to Audiology, some significant distance from ENT, where we were greeted by the receptionist.

The Porter introduced us:-

“ENT have sent us here to have a hearing aid dome fitted”

“They shouldn’t have done that. You don’t have an appointment. This is a clinic!”

(Expressions of disbelief from Porter and patient)

In a flustered manner the receptionist offered to fix the dome but her shaking hands failed. I then offered to try but by then my hands were shaking too much and I failed.

The Porter then said:-

“Give it to me Mate, it can’t be difficult”

....and with no effort at all the Porter fixed it!

Oh! Mr. Porter what shall I do.....?

During the second stay I needed a CT scan with the use of a contrast dye.

The Ward nurses prepared me for this specific scan by inserting a cannula in my hand and a Porter was called to take me to the scanner. The Porter arrived, this one slight in stature and a stranger to military service and tattoo parlours. He inspected the hospital wristband to confirm that I was the correct patient and in doing so looked at the cannula and said to the nurses-

“This is the wrong cannula for this scan. They won’t get the dye through this!”

....and the Porter was right!

“Oh Mr. Porter what shall I do.....?”

A morality tale of our time.

KRW

Village Contacts

Dingley Parish Council

Chair - Bill Jones wrjarion@aol.com

Parish Clerk - Justina Medwell - clerk.dingley@gmail.com

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Julie Archer – juliearcher@gmail.com

Dingley Village Hall Committee

Chair - Jo Ingham – 01858 535300 jolyon.ingham@talk21.com

Hall Bookings – Tony Lucas 01858 535201 tonylucas@aol.com

Treasurer - David Adderley - 15consulting@btconnect.com

Trustee – Jamie Robertson robertsondingley@btinternet.com

Wendy Brown - wendybrown@dys-cover.co.uk

Jennifer Clegg – jennifer_clegg@live.co.uk

Anna Fitzpatrick - annafitz@btinternet.com

Gary Marsden – gary_marsden@hotmail.com

Bruce Smith - gdaybrucesmith@hotmail.com

Rebecca Winship – rebeccawinship1@gmail.com

Dingley Parish Church

Churchwarden/Treasurer - Jamie Robertson 01858 535573

Village Pump Dingley

Editor: Elaine Whitesides

e.whitesides@btinternet.com

Next issue April 1st

Submissions by March 1st please

